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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SADRIST AGREES TO DIALOGUE WITH REO

REF: BASRAH 57

CLASSIFIED BY: Louis L. Bono, Director, Basrah Regional Embassy
Office, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (S) Summary: A senior Sadrhist cleric, Sheikh Mohammed Daoud-al-Basyri, resumed secret talks with Regional Embassy Office (REO) officials on August 18. (Reftel) Mohammed agreed on the need to establish a dialogue with the United States and said he would assemble his colleagues for this purpose. The director described the quick response funds (QRF) program and suggested Mohammed submit a proposal. End summary.

¶2. (S) Mohammed said he wants to improve relations between the Sadrists and the United States. He sees this as the means to promote stability and development and rid Iraq of extreme influences. The director agreed on the need to establish ties and highlighted the common objectives, especially the desire to rid Iraq of foreign influences.

¶3. (S) Mohammed said that Ja'ish al-Mahdi (JAM) elements in Basrah are increasingly coming under Iranian control. He said Iran is trying to chase the U.S. out of Iraq, break the will of the U.S., and expose U.S. policy in the region as a failure in order to convince neighboring states of the dangers of regime change. Mohammed also said there are dormant al-Qaeda cells in the az-Zubayr district of Basrah, which are supported by the Gulf states. He offered to provide information on "anarchists" to the REO. The director welcomed the offer and asked Mohammed if he would like to be put in direct contact our colleagues who target insurgents. Mohammed said he would prefer to provide the information directly to the REO. (Note: Mohammed has provided names and contact information, which we have passed on to Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force representatives. End note.)

¶4. (S) Mohammed claims to be very influential among the Sadrists and has ties with Sadrhist leaders in Najaf, Diwaniya, Ammarah, and Nasariyah. He believes many of his colleagues support relations with the U.S. but fear they may be targeted by the fringe elements. He said the Sadrists want to participate in the political process and asked for political and economic support, noting that the Iranians provide direct support to political parties. The director said that the U.S. does not provide direct support to any political parties.

¶5. (S) The director told Mohammed that in order to strengthen ties, we need to take the relationship to the next step and proposed a two-part approach. The first part is to open a dialogue by expanding the meetings. He said the dialogue could eventually involve a cultural visit to the U.S. for Mohammed and his colleagues and pointed out Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq

officials made such visits. The second part would be to work with Mohammed and his colleagues on community-based projects. The director suggested that Mohammed submit a proposal to renovate a park. This would provide jobs and community recreation space - a need repeatedly expressed. If successful, the director said we could look to other projects.

¶6. (S) Mohammed welcomed the suggestions, but fears the radical elements within his organization. The director said that we will work together to maintain the confidentiality of the meetings. Mohammed agreed to confer with his colleagues about commencing a dialogue and said he would provide the REO with a proposal to renovate a park in the near future.

BONO